

Powerline contact

List powerline hazards on site:

Explain dangers

Powerline contact is a major cause of fatal accidents and critical injuries.

These types of incidents usually involve heavy equipment such as backhoes, dump trucks, boom trucks, cranes, and excavators.

Beware of contact when moving extension ladders, rolling scaffolds, long lengths of pipe, and siding. Also, beware of the powerline moving (i.e., blowing in the wind).

Identify controls

The constructor must develop written procedures ahead of time if the equipment or its load could encroach on the minimum permitted distance to an overhead powerline.

These procedures must be communicated to every employer and worker on the project. They should include the use of warning devices and signs.

Follow these safe practices when working around powerlines:

- Do not store material and equipment below overhead powerlines.
- Obey all warning devices or signs.
- Use a signaller to direct equipment operators and truck drivers. The signaller must be in full view of the operator and have a clear view of the powerline.
 - The signaller must warn drivers and operators when any part of their equipment or load approaches the minimum distances set by law.

- When erecting or moving a ladder or scaffold, do not let it lean or drift toward overhead powerlines. Always maintain minimum allowable clearances.
- To determine powerline voltage, check markings on the pole or call the utility.

In case of accidental contact with a powerline, follow these practices:

- Ask someone to call the local utility to shut off power.
- Never touch equipment and the ground at the same time until the utility confirms that it is safe to do so.
- If possible, break contact by driving the equipment clear of the powerline. Otherwise do not leave the equipment until the utility shuts down the power or fire forces you to jump clear.
- Keep everyone away from any equipment that is nearby or in contact with a powerline.
- Beware of time relays. Even after breakers are tripped by line damage, relays may be triggered to restore power.
- If evacuation is required, slowly shuffle away without lifting your feet or leaving a gap between your feet.

Demonstrate

Review the company's written procedures with your crew and point out any warning devices and signs on the site.

Review the minimum permitted distances, which are listed in the Construction Projects regulation (O. Reg. 213/91) and in the table below.

Minimum distances to powerlines

Voltage rating	Minimum distance
750 to 150,000 volts	3 m (10 ft.)
150,001 to 250,000 volts	4.5 m (15 ft.)
More than 250,000 volts	6 m (20 ft.)

Source: O. Reg. 213/91, s. 188